

As part of Project Intense, Arcadia Station's Roboticist and Adventurer, Alice Action, created the three Wolfroids, Alpha, Beta, and Omega. Companions, Assistants and Bodyguards, they live with Alice near the Ancient Tanglewood Forest, inhabited by the Amazons. Together, they help protect and improve life at Arcadia Station. They are Alice Action and the Wolfroids!

**Alice Action and the Wolfroids in Amazons &
Archers**

Timm Gillick

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Prologue

It was an evil planetary outpost, and only I knew that. Not sure why no one believed me, it's not like I'm a nutcase. I'm a scientist. Robotics. Yet not one person I talked to at Arcadia Station took me at my word that Tanglewood Outpost was evil, so I had to prove it.

The name is Action. Alice Action. No idea why I said it like that. Think I heard it in a story somewhere. I used my skills in robotics to create three companions to assist me in the lab, and on my many adventures. Alpha, Beta, and Omega, my Wolfdroids. Cutest, toughest, smartest things on four legs. Or two. Depends if they're standing. I'm not being very clear.

I created the Wolfdroids as part of a new double action security and science project I was working on called Project Intense. Don't look at me like that, I didn't name it. The muckety muck higher ups at Arcadia Station did. Anyway, they wanted to add some robots to the workforce, something that could pull a double duty since they didn't need to sleep or eat. I looked at my needs at the lab and saw I needed help with security and a couple extra pairs of hands to move things around. Alpha, Beta, and Omega were the results.

All three can run on all four legs, or stand and walk on two. Their front paws have extendable fingers and an opposable thumb that retract when in wolf mode. With actual hands, they can manipulate tools like a human, or wield a weapon. Not that they really need anything other than their Laser Eyes or Power Howl.

Alpha was my first Wolfdroid. He's the leader of the pack in both size and brains. He's furthered my

understanding of robotics by leaps and bounds in the past three years, further than I would have gotten in ten without him. Silver-white in color, he stands six and a half feet tall when bipedal, just over four when on all fours.

Beta is the runt of the group (but don't let him hear you say that), standing at only five feet and four inches when bipedal. He is the speedster and the spy in the pack. He's matte black in color to absorb light and hide in the shadows. In silent mode, he can walk across broken glass and you'd never hear him coming.

Omega is almost a mix of the two. As the "youngest" he is the jokester of the pack. Standing five feet, ten inches upright, and three feet three on all fours, his golden shine lets him stand out, even when he doesn't want to, which is almost never. He provides distractions, conversation, and a sense of humor, not always at an appropriate time.

As for me, I have blond hair, a fondness for the color blue, and a love of getting into situations I probably shouldn't. My parents were both scientists. Dad is part of the ruling council here at Arcadia Station, and Mom... well Mom is an Amazon, and this story involves her in ways I wish it wouldn't.

You see, the Amazons were indigenous to this planet when Arcadia Station was built about fifty years ago. They were actually colonists from a previous colonization project that mostly failed a hundred years before Arcadia Station, but no one knew that until just a few years ago. A peaceful co-existence always existed between the Amazons and the Arcadians until the current Queen, Anza, rose to power.

Outside Arcadia Station is mostly forest. The Tanglewood is its name, and as Arcadia Station grew, Tanglewood shrank. The Amazons were fine with this as they didn't need much space. When the previous Amazon Queen, Callista, died at the age of 72, her youngest daughter killed her two older sisters to gain the crown. She had had enough of losing ground to Arcadia Station and wanted it back.

She set her Amazons on a quest for something that would help them take back some of Tanglewood, and one of them found something. That's where I come in because I was on the expedition that discovered it when the Amazons found us.

Chapter One: The Discovery

"Not like that," I said.

"I don't know how you want me to do it, then,"
replied Omega.

"The heck you don't. You only want me to do it so
you don't have to."

"You got me there."

I sighed and moved Omega away from the digger
controls. "I am showing you this one, and only one, more
time."

I maneuvered the digging claw into position on the
canyon wall and took out a large section. I then dropped
it on top of the wall in a neat pile so it didn't spill back
down into the canyon.

The current project was an exploratory one. We
were fifteen miles north of Arcadia Station, and still fifty
miles south of Apollo Station, which was the first one
established on this planet, officially dubbed Solan III,
but colloquially called Silverhold due to the rich silver
deposits found everywhere. The Arcadian council got
word there were some iron deposits in this canyon,
something we were running out of as the colonies were
still new to this planet. Arcadia Station is the most recent
outpost, after Apollo and Chronos Stations had been
established. All three were equidistant from the original
settlement of Prometheus Base, population well over half
a million at this point.

The construction of those four settlements, along
with the vehicles and other industries had depleted what
iron had originally been found. Further construction was

halted until sufficient replacement quantities could be found.

The surveyors had marked this canyon as one of the best possible locations for iron, so we started here.

Omega took over the controls of the digger, made two acceptable passes with it, so I patted him on the shoulder and moved to check on Beta.

Beta was scouting the area with a magnetometer, trying to pinpoint more precise areas to dig so we didn't have to raze the entire canyon. Strip mining was something we had left behind long ago.

I waited at the tent we had dubbed "HQ" for Beta to return from his latest run. It never took him more than ten minutes to run out, scan a spot, mark it, then run back and mark it on 3-D topographical hologram. We'd found two iron-rich veins in just as many days. One more day of this and we could pack it in and head to the next location.

Beta almost knocked me over as he came into the tent. "Sorry, Alice," he said in his low, raspy voice. "Didn't know you'd be in here."

"And I didn't know you'd be coming from that direction," I said. "Have you scouted the other side already?"

"Only this side. Other side finished before end of day." Beta was a robot of very few words.

"Anything interesting?" I asked.

"Two silver veins, one big iron vein."

I watched him punch the information into the map and saw the metals he discovered pop up in the hologram. "Wow. That one alone is worth the trip." He grunted in response. "Okay, carry on."

Without another word, he ran off. I wondered if I shouldn't have programmed a little humor into him. At least I made him fast enough. Top speed around 120 mph, normal running speed about half that, with full maneuverability. The other two are no slouched when it comes to speed, but nothing like Beta.

I took the equipment lift to the canyon floor to check on my last Woldroid, Alpha. Riding the lift down, I looked up to where Omega was digging chunks out of the opposite wall. As I turned away from the growing excavation, a reflection caught my eye. But when I looked back, I didn't see it anymore. I made a mental note to take a look once I got back topside.

"Alpha?" I said as I stepped off the lift. "How's it going down here?" I walked towards the right, where Alpha had a small testing lab set up. It was far easier for him to have a small one set up down here than carry core samples topside every hour or so.

"I prefer the solitude, Alice," Alpha's deep, gravelly voice rumbled. "But the occasional visit is most welcome."

"Glad to hear it." I came around a small rock outcropping and Alpha's camp came into view. He stood to his full height under the canopy, testing the latest core sample from canyon wall. His eyes followed the lines on the spectrometer far too fast for me to follow.

"When are you going to allow me to upgrade our internal sensors, Alice? I'd prefer to ingest the sample and acquire the data without the middle man. This is time-consuming labor that could be spent otherwise."

"Because the other processes are slow, Alpha, we've been over this." I picked up one of the core samples he'd already tested and looked at the results on the matching

data sheet. "If I keep the three of you working at the same pace, Omega will keep working. If he sees either you or Beta not doing anything, even if you've already finished your tasks, he won't finish his."

"Can he even see me from up there?"

"Probably not, but that doesn't mean..." My communicator badge beeped, indicating an incoming message. I tapped it and said, "Go for Action."

"You take too much enjoyment uttering that phrase," Alpha whispered.

"Alice! Come quick! You gotta see this! Alpha too!" Omega often got excited at the simplest of things, but there were times when his enthusiasm was warranted, and I could hear it in his voice now.

"On my way." I tapped my badge to close the communication. "Alpha."

Until Alpha's personality formed on his AI matrix, I had never dreamed I would hear a robot sigh in exasperation. Yet now I hear it almost daily from him. "Must I?"

"You know Omega. He'll keep pestering until you cave."

Alpha sighed again, scribbled a note on his current data sheet, and set it down. "Fine."

As we walked to the lift, and I wondered if this had something to do with the glint I had spotted on my way down. As we reached the halfway point, Omega shouted down at us. "C'mon, c'mon, c'mon, c'mon!" he said. "Hurry up!"

"We can only go as fast as the lift!" I yelled back.

"Uuugggh!" Omega said and bounced away.

"Ugh is right," Alpha muttered.

"Behave," I said.

We reached the top, Omega grabbed my hand and practically dragged me to the digger. "Oh my god, you gotta gotta gotta see!"

Beta stood next to the digger, looking towards the excavation. I had never seen him so still for so long. "Beta?" I said. "Are you okay?"

As I stepped next to him, I saw what had entranced him, and why Omega had pushed so hard to get me and Alpha to the top of the canyon. Omega had uncovered a cavern, man-made, about a third of the way down the canyon wall. Even from here we could see a green glow emanating from somewhere deeper in the cave. "What in the..." I said.

"I know!" Omega said. "I found something! I don't know what, but I found it! Can I keep it?" He turned pleading eyes to me.

"I don't know," I said. "We'll need to see what it is first."

"Carved out cavern with no discernible entrance," Alpha said. I could almost hear the "gears turning" in his head as he did calculations and examined historical texts in his memory. "This could be quite interesting."

"See? Even Alpha likes it!" Omega said. "Let's go!"

He made it about three strides away before I stopped him. "Hang on, Omega. Everything is set up over here."

"We can climb... No wait, too much work. We can move... Nope, even more work..." He turned pleading eyes back to me. "Alice... What do we do?"

"Get out your glider packs, boys. We'll fly across."

Chapter Two: The Orb

I must admit, there isn't much anything better I can think of than flying. Not in an airplane, hover car, starship, or anything where you're closed in, but with the wind in your face, feet off the ground, arms out, flying. I rigged up an attachment for the boys that was essentially a jetpack with wings for each of them, but each one was designed for them in particular. No one else could use it, and they couldn't even trade between themselves. Alpha's was white, Omega's was red, and Beta's... well it was matte black of course. He loved the stealth thing. His also had a whisper mode that gave him all the speed and maneuverability, but it didn't put out much more noise than he normally did. I had my own as well, but it was a generic one for humans, with some special modifications made by me, for me.

We flew across the canyon in a wide, looping arc so we could get a little flying time in. Even staid, stoic Alpha and calm, mysterious Beta enjoyed being in the air as much as Omega and I did. Well, almost.

Alpha landed first at the "entrance" to the cave, which was just the hole Omega tore open with the digger. He retracted his jetpack wings so they aligned with his body, stood on his hind legs, and walked inside the cave. I landed next, Beta right beside me. Omega did loops in the air above the canyon. Beta and I glanced back once, shared a shrug, and followed Alpha.

Once in the cave proper, we could see the enormity of the room. With the top of the cliff sitting about two hundred feet above our heads, the roof of this cave was about a third of that at it's domed peak. It spread out in a

circle from beneath the highest point, making it a perfectly round room, with the exception of the hole Omega made, and a small doorway to our left. We had no problems seeing in the cavern, not because of the small amount of light coming in from outside, but the glowing green orb resting on a pedestal in the center of the room. The bright green glow reflected off Alpha's face as he circled the pedestal, eyes scanning up and down its entirety.

"Anything?" I asked.

"The pedestal is plain granite," Alpha said. "The orb... I'm having trouble with."

"Really?" I said. I stepped closer to look at it myself.

"No radiation, radio frequencies, any kind of emanations I can read."

"And you can see them all," I said. It looked like a glass sphere with a reflective phosphorescent coating. Or was it clear and the phosphorescence came from within? I couldn't tell. "You think it's safe to touch?"

Omega flew into the cavern, landed, folded his wings and ran up to us. He was always the quickest to adapt to new attachments or updates to his programming. He spotted the orb and said, "Wow! Pretty!" and before Alpha or I could say anything, he picked it up.

Nothing happened. I looked at Alpha. "Guess it's safe to touch," I said.

"At least by robots," Alpha said.

"How does it feel, Omega?" I asked him. All the boys had sensors in their paws and fingers. Their other senses could be cranked up to be able to see farther, hear distant noises, etc. I hoped Omega's finger sensors could pick up something that Alpha's visual scans didn't.

"It's not glass," he said. "I'm not sure what it is. Weighs about two pounds, and..." He cocked his head to one side like he could hear a distant sound. He looked at Alpha. "You hear that?"

Alpha started at the globe in Omega's hands. He nodded. Beta was suddenly next to him. "As do I," he said.

"Well I can't hear anything," I said.

"It's well below your auditory sensing capabilities," Alpha said. "It's a pulsating sound, much like a beacon."

"Huh," I said. "Well see if you can figure out a way to shut it off." I turned to Beta. "What did you find?"

"Alcove there has pictographic history. Took pictures."

"Good, let me know what the translations are when done." He nodded.

Omega set the orb back on the pedestal. He took his hands away, looked at it a second and said, "Well that didn't work."

"What?"

"I thought maybe putting it back would turn it off. It's growing stronger."

Then I could hear it. Or feel it rather. It felt similar to being immersed in water and the pressure increases and decreases, pulsating squeezes. While the feeling wasn't unpleasant, it was disconcerting. "You say this is putting out a signal like a beacon?" Alpha nodded. "Why do you say that?"

"It is similar to our homing beacon at Arcadia Station," Alpha said. "It... feels the same." Omega nodded.

I stared at it a moment. "Can one of you carry it back to base? In your cargo hatch?" Each of the boys had

a small opening in their stomach area that could be used for storage of supplies and what not. Usually it was food and water for me whenever we travelled light. "Beta, how about you? Your coating should help dampen that signal, too."

He nodded, stepped forward to grab the orb when the glow increased, as did the sound and feeling of the beacon. I grabbed my head in pain. The boys stopped dead in their tracks, unmoving as if suddenly switched off. I lashed out at the orb and knocked it from the pedestal. As soon as my fingers touched it, the sound and light stopped. The boys moved again.

"What the hell?" I said.

"Fascinating," Alpha said. "I could think, but not move."

"Same," Omega said. Beta nodded.

"Open up, Beta," I said. He opened his cargo hatch, I picked up the orb and placed it inside. He closed up and I said, "Let's get outta here."

We flew across the canyon to the base camp. Beta kept the orb inside his cargo hatch, and he went to the HQ tent when we landed. He plugged in to the base computer to access the processor in the hopes to speed up the translations.

"Omega, can you take this field generator to that cave entrance?" I asked. I handed him a portable force field generator. We used them all the time on various archeological digs to help preserve the area.

"Why?" He took the small device.

"I know we're out in the middle of nowhere, but we still want to keep people out of there. That is quite a find and we need to preserve it until it can be studied. We are here for mining, remember?"

"Oh yeah," he said with a grin. "I forgot."

"You remember how to work this? Set it down in the entrance, press this button three times, then this one once. Take the thing that pops out and step back. That's it."

"Press three times, once, take the thingie. Got it." He spread his wings and took off so fast I blinked twice before I realized he was gone.

"I should've made him a bird," I said.

"I'm going to pack up," Alpha said. "It seems we are finished with the survey."

"Sure," I said. "We can present it to the Council and then request a trip to work on that cavern."

"Hey!" Omega yelled from across the way. "There's people in here!"

Alpha and I turned to look and saw four tall women dressed in leather, pounding their fists against the force field.

"What do I do?"

"How did they get in there?" I asked.

"Beta said nothing of another entrance."

"Maybe he didn't find one," I said. Alpha gave me a side-eyed look. "Yeah, I don't buy it either." I yelled to Omega, "Get back over here!"

Omega leapt into the air, and within seconds he stood next to us. "How did people get in there?"

"Same way we did?" I said. "But why are they in there?"

"The orb called them," Alpha said. "It was transmitting a beacon signal."

"Let's go talk to them," I said. Omega's wings popped out. "Not you, just Alpha and I."

"Aww," Omega said.

"You can help Beta start packing. We are leaving once we talk to them."

Alpha and I leapt into the air and flew across the canyon.

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